United Nations A/54/882

General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 May 2000

Original: English

Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 49 (b)
United Nations reform measures and proposals: the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations

Letter dated 22 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instruction from my Government, I have the honour to transmit the text of the position paper of the People's Republic of China on the Millennium Summit of the United Nations (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 49 (b).

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Annex to the letter dated 22 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Chinese and English]

Position paper of the People's Republic of China on the Millennium Summit of the United Nations

Peace and development are the two major themes of the world today. As humanity enters the new century and the new millenium, it is the wish of people of all nations that the lofty course of world peace and development be pushed forward and a just and equitable new international political and economic order be established. These are the pressing tasks before the international community and therefore should become the objectives of the United Nations in the 21st century. In China's view, to fulfill these objectives, the following must be done:

I. To carry on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and promote international peace, security, prosperity and justice

Experiences in the 20th century have proven that the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, such as sovereignty and territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in other countries' internal affairs, non-use and non-threat of force and peaceful solutions to international disputes, as well as the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence are the basic principles of international law and constitute the fundamental guarantee for world peace and security. In the past half-century after the War, world peace has relied on the adherence to and defense of these basic principles. The purposes and principles of the UN Charter and other basic principles of international law, far from being outdated, should be maintained and strengthened as the basic principles and effective guidelines for state-state relations.

II. To strengthen the role of the UN and maintain the authority of the Security Council

As the most representative inter-governmental international organization, the UN plays an irreplaceable leading role in international affairs. It is the shared responsibility of all member states to defend and reinforce the role of the UN. Member states should take real actions to render political, financial and human resources support to the UN.

The UN Security Council has the primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security. No country or group of countries should have the privilege to take precedence over the Security Council. In international relations, all actions of coercion involving the use of force, including those under regional organizations or arrangements, should have the explicit authorization of the Security Council. Council-authorized multi-national operations should strictly abide by relevant mandates by the Security Council. The reform of the UN should reflect the common will and interests of all member states, and, most important, the interests of the great number of developing countries must be protected. The reform of the Security Council should give priority to better representation of the developing countries.

III. To enhance the democratization of international political relations and promote the establishment of a just and equitable new international political order

All countries, large or small, rich or poor, strong or weak, are equal members of the international community and have the right to participate as equals in international affairs and in solutions of global issues. The internal affairs of a country should be left to its own people to handle. Major issues in the world should be solved through equal consultation among countries on the basis of mutual respect. This is the democratic principle in handling international affairs. Forcing one's own will, modalities or values upon others by relying on one's economic, technological and military strength runs entirely against the democratic principle.

We should earnestly carry out the above-mentioned democratic principle in international relations and promote the establishment of a just and equitable new international political order on the basis of observing the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and other basic principles of international law.

IV. To change the inequitable international economic order and promote the establishment of a just and equitable new international economic order

The pace of economic globalization has made it more necessary than

ever before to have a just and equitable new international economic order. The phenomenon of the rich becoming richer and the poor becoming poorer should not be allowed to continue. The international financial and trade systems should be reformed to be fair and impartial and to enable developing countries to participate more fully in the decision-making process. The UN should play a leading role in this regard. To tame the negative impacts of globalization and narrow the gap between the North and the South should not only be a goal for developing countries but also an issue that deserves the full attention of developed countries. Developed countries must demonstrate their political will and take effective and real actions to open markets, transfer technologies, provide debt relief and increase official development assistance to the developing countries with no conditions attached, so as to reduce the North-South gap. The UN should give precedence to the promotion of development. A just and equitable new international economic order will conduce to the development and prosperity of all countries.

V. To establish a new concept of security, push forward the disarmament process and safeguard international security

To safeguard peace and security for the whole humanity in the 21st century, we need to formulate a new concept of security, one that features mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation.

The aim of disarmament is to increase security for all countries. It should become neither a tool for stronger nations to control the weaker ones nor an instrument for a few countries to optimize their own armament in order to seek security superiority.

For a long time to come, nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament will remain, as it is today, an important task for the international community. Eliminating nuclear weapons and rooting out the dangers of a nuclear war represent the common aspiration of all peoples in the world. The 21st century should be a century witnessing the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons.

Progress in nuclear disarmament cannot be achieved without the global strategic equilibrium and stability. The research, development, deployment and proliferation of advanced anti-missile systems and the

revision of or even withdrawal from the existing disarmament treaties on which the global strategic equilibrium hinges will inevitably exert an extensive impact on international security and stability. The international community must take necessary measures to preempt this dangerous development.

VI. To respect each other, engage in dialogues as equals and to promote and protect human rights and basic freedoms

All nations should respect the acknowledged basic principles of the UN Charter and international human rights instruments and promote international human rights dialogues and exchanges. Human rights should be promoted as a whole rather than divided up. Common actions in realizing economic, social, cultural rights and the right to development should be strengthened. Practices to politicize human rights issues, create confrontations and even interfere in other countries' internal affairs must be stopped. To put human rights above sovereignty or interfere in other countries' internal affairs by force under the pretext of humanitarianism not only runs counter to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter but also is detrimental to the course of promoting and protecting human rights. The diversity of the world should be respected and so should every country's and every region's inheritance and development of their own cultural traditions and social values.

It has become a common understanding of all nations in the world that democracy must be enhanced, the rule of law strengthened and human rights protected. Nations have the right to choose their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and paths to development. Only by accommodating the domestic conditions and people's requirements in all countries is it possible to effectively expand and improve democracy as well as the rule of law and to promote and protect human rights.

VII. To strengthen international cooperation and stand up should to shoulder to global challenges

Global environmental protection efforts should be carried out and strengthened in a spirit of common but differentiated responsibilities so as to promote sustainable development. At the same time, international

cooperation in social, economic, financial, resources and other fields should be enhanced on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and shared risks. And countries should join hands in fighting against arms smuggling, illicit drug trafficking, terrorism and other transnational crimes.